



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Office of Emergency Medical Services
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ADVISORY

To: All MA-Licensed Ambulance Services
From: Dr. Jonathan Burstein, State EMS Medical Director
Re: TASERS and EMS Response
Date: September 1, 2006

After extensive analysis of the scientific and clinical issues, the Department is advising all EMS providers of the following procedures for EMS response to individuals struck by TASER or other electrically-based weapons:

1. If police request an EMS response for an individual struck by a TASER or similar weapon, the responding EMS personnel shall assess and treat the patient under appropriate protocols. Be especially alert for spinal injury and cardiac dysrhythmias. All patients who have been struck by TASERS will be transported to a hospital emergency department for evaluation. Impaled probes are impaled objects and shall not be removed by EMS personnel unless their removal is necessary to provide life- or limb-saving treatment.
2. If the patient meets guidelines for refusal of care, the patient himself or herself may refuse such care. All applicable documentation, including a trip record, shall be completed, and on-line medical control may be contacted. Law enforcement personnel **may not** offer a valid substituted refusal of care for a patient.
3. Law enforcement personnel are expected to assist in the safe transport of patients to a hospital emergency department for evaluation. Patients who are in custody should be accompanied to the hospital by appropriate law enforcement personnel, as would be the case for other patients in such custody requiring medical attention.

Please see accompanying fact sheet for more information about TASERS and other similar weapons. For further questions, contact Tom Quail, RN, OEMS Clinical Coordinator, at 617-753-7318.